

4 November 2015

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft,
President of the 70th Session of the General Assembly,
At the Sixth Committee debate**

Mr Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, it my pleasure to address the Sixth Committee today for the first time in my Presidency.

Let me begin by congratulating Ambassador Eden Charles of Trinidad and Tobago, on his election as Chair of this Committee, as well as to the Bureau members.

It is a particular pleasure for me to address this Committee during what has become known as International Law Week, when legal experts from all quarters gather in New York for an intense week of debate and work. To all of you present, you are very welcome and I salute your commitment to the promotion of international law.

Ladies and gentlemen, this year of commemorations and anniversaries, should inspire us all to reflect on the work and immense responsibility which has been entrusted to us.

The UN Charter sets as an objective the establishment of ‘conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained’. The development and promotion of International Law, therefore, is one of this Organization’s primary goals and has been at the centre of its work since its foundation.

During the past seven decades, this Committee has proven time and again how its work can change for the better the international legal order. Your work and that of the International Law Commission has given us some fundamental international reference points: instruments on consular and diplomatic relations, on the law of treaties, and on combatting terrorism, to name but a few.

As the international community recommits to further action, we must demonstrate that our best successes are still ahead of and that today's immense global challenges are neither intractable nor unconquerable.

The recently adopted 2030 Agenda for sustainable development demonstrates what is possible when we listen to each other and to other stakeholders and when we maintain our focus on the ultimate objective. In assuming voluntary commitments to 17 sustainable development goals, world leaders recognized the interlinkages between economic development, global poverty and inequality, environmental degradation and peaceful, inclusive and just societies. They underlined also the interrelationship between the three pillars of the UN and our ever-increasing interdependency.

I have been following the work of this Committee to date this session as it covered more than 15 items, and your recent debates and the number of interventions – on “Measures to eliminate international terrorism”, on “The rule of law at the national and international levels”, on “The scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction” and on “Criminal accountability of United officials and experts on mission” – demonstrate that even if there are some differences, member states all agree on the importance of discussing them and taking action in this most important legal forum in the world.

In this regard, efforts should be made to resolve outstanding issues particularly those concerning the draft comprehensive convention on terrorism. The expertise and commitment of all involved will, I hope, result in substantive advances on this issue and in this commemorative year, I urge you all to embrace the momentum generated thus far.

Ladies and gentlemen, legal advisers, here and in capital, have the primary responsibility for establishing international law at the centre of the political and diplomatic decision making. You are guarantors of the equal application of the rule of law to all States and to international organizations, including the United Nations and its principal organs. You are responsible for ensuring that respect for and the promotion of the rule of law and justice guides the activities of these actors, according predictability and legitimacy to their actions.

As you consider the remaining items on the agenda over the next weeks, I encourage you to take confidence from your past achievements, to recognise current challenges and to advance with a spirit of consensus.

I am sure that, together with the Chair and Bureau and the Codification Division, this Committee will continue to be run smoothly during this session. My Office and I, stand ready to support you to ensure successful conclusions to your deliberations.

Before concluding, I wish to draw your attention to the third of three high-level events that I will hold during my Presidency on 12-13 July. Focused on the United Nations' role in the field of human rights, this event will be an opportunity to discuss how best to advance matters relating to governance, the rule of law, gender equality and institution building, as a contribution to the 2030 Agenda. I encourage the active participation of all member states and other actors with an interest in this subject.

I thank you for your attention.